

STUDY PACK 10

ISRAEL

“For any people to boast in the glory of the past but to deny the secret that made the past is to perish.”
~~ G. Campbell Morgan ~~

I. THE ANTITHESIS OF PAGANISM

God chose a nation to establish _____ and to refute _____, Genesis 12:1-3.

Israel acknowledged the _____ instead of the _____. Israel gave the world _____ based upon _____ from God instead of one based upon _____.

God gave Israel ceremonies and rituals that looked _____.

Israel was taught to _____.

Israel was taught to exalt the Creator above human government.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF ISRAEL

Israel has had more influence over the history of the world than any other nation. The _____ has done more to establish guidelines for lawmakers than any other legal code. The nation of Israel was used by God to provide the written revelation of the Old Testament. God’s inspired Scripture is unique among ancient literature in _____, _____, _____, and _____. Most importantly, God used the nation of Israel to send the Messiah into the world.

Israel occupies a strategic location with the Mediterranean Sea on the west and the Arabian desert on the east. Through Israel lay the only caravan routes _____.

III. THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD

The story of Israel properly begins with God’s call of Abraham. Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees — in the Mesopotamian area. Mesopotamia had been overtaken by paganism and God called Abraham to begin a new nation which would worship the Creator God — the God of the Bible.

God called Abraham to leave Ur and travel to the land of Canaan. He promised to be with him and make him the father of many nations. The Amorite and Philistine tribes already in Canaan were deep into pagan religion and pagan practice. Egypt exerted a great deal of influence in this region. Abraham was accompanied by his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot.

Four kings from Mesopotamia invaded Canaan and carried the people of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah captive. Abraham's nephew Lot and his family had moved into Sodom and were carried away also. Abraham formed an army of his trained servants and rescued the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The people of Sodom did not learn anything from their experience and went even deeper into rebellion against God. They exalted homosexuality until it dominated their culture. God destroyed Sodom and four surrounding cities in a supernatural judgment sparing only Lot and his two daughters.

Abraham's first two sons were Ishmael and Isaac. The line of the nation of Israel continued through Isaac. Ishmael's descendants developed into several of the Arab tribes of the region.

Isaac and his wife Rebekah had twins Esau and Jacob. The line of the nation of Israel continued through Jacob. Esau's descendants developed into some of the Arab tribes. Jacob had twelve sons who became the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. Ten of the brothers sold their brother Joseph to slave traders on their way to Egypt. Joseph became a slave in Egypt, then a prisoner. After interpreting two of Pharaoh's dreams, Joseph was promoted to the position of prime minister in Egypt. Joseph did much to increase the power of the Pharaoh. During a terrible famine the Israelites were moved into Egypt where they were welcomed by Joseph and treated favorably by the Pharaoh. When a new Dynasty took over the office of Pharaoh, the Israelites were enslaved.

IV. THE EXODUS AND THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

The Jews continued for several generations as slaves in Egypt. The Egyptian government determined to limit the population of the Jews by ordering the death of all male babies. One Jewish baby, Moses, was adopted by the daughter of the Pharaoh and raised in the royal court of Egypt. As an adult Moses identified with the people of Israel. As a result of his killing of an Egyptian, he had to flee into the wilderness. God was training him for a great purpose. He would use every bit of the skills learned in the royal courts of Egypt while in the wilderness.

God called Moses and his brother Aaron to lead the nation of Israel back to Canaan. Pharaoh refused several appeals to allow the Jews to leave even though the Creator God displayed His power by sending ten supernatural plagues upon the nation of Egypt. When the last plague killed all the first born sons in Egypt, the children of Israel were allowed to leave.

The children of Israel, by now numbering over 2,000,000 people, moved slowly towards Canaan. The Pharaoh changed his mind about allowing the Jews to leave Egypt and followed them with a large force of chariots. The advance of the children of Israel was stopped by the Red Sea. Trapped between the Red Sea on one side, an impossible desert on two sides, things looked bleak for Israel. God divided the Red Sea, creating a dry path for the nation of Israel. When the Egyptian army tried to travel on the same path, God closed the sea upon them, drowning the entire army.

When the children of Israel lacked the faith to try and conquer Canaan, God determined that they would spend _____.
During this period of wandering, Moses died and was succeeded by Joshua.

During the years in the wilderness, God gave the Old Testament law to Moses, including the Ten Commandments. The law gave the Israelites _____, _____ and _____.

Under the leadership of Joshua, the Israelites crossed the Jordan River into Canaan and defeated the strong city of Jericho. When one of the Israelites disobeyed God's instructions, they experienced defeat at the city of Ai. When the matter was made right with God, Israel began to prosper again. The Israelites went from city-state to city-state, experiencing tremendous victories.

During the lifetime of Joshua, the children of Canaan remained in control of a few cities (including Jerusalem) and some mountainous areas.

V. THE JUDGES

After the death of Joshua and his leadership team, the nation of Israel existed without a central government and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Little was done to complete the conquest of Canaan. The children of Israel were tempted by the immorality and license of the pagan Canaanites. Repeatedly they adopted the wicked practices of the Canaanites. God repeatedly judged the Israelites by allowing nations to invade and subdue the Israelites. When the people of Israel repented and turned to God, _____.

A judge was a leader who gave guidance to Israel during a certain period of crisis. Each judge was called by the Lord and the purpose for their rule was to deliver Israel from a crisis time.

At least fifteen judges ruled over Israel. Israel was beset by a horrible civil war when God used the other eleven tribes to judge Benjamin. As the Philistines along the Mediterranean coast began to grow in power and strength, Israel began to clamor for a stronger central government and a king. This was clearly a rejection of the direct rule of the Lord.

VI. THE UNITED MONARCHY

At the direction of God, Samuel anointed Saul as the first king of Israel. Saul soon led the nation to a series of victories over the Philistines and other enemies. Saul honored God during his early reign, but during his later years he rebelled against the Lord.

God anointed a young shepherd boy named David to be the next king of Israel. David was an outstanding musician and with God's help he became a great warrior.

He killed the giant Goliath, a great warrior of the Philistines. As his military exploits continued, he became even more popular than King Saul. King Saul forced him to flee into the wilderness where he formed his own military force.

After Saul's death, David ruled over part of Israel and Saul's son Ishbosheth ruled over the rest of it. A civil war continued between the two forces. After Ishbosheth was murdered by his own men, David became king over the whole nation.

David was succeeded by his son Solomon. During Solomon's early years, _____, _____, and _____. However, Solomon rebelled against the Lord and began to practice paganism.

VII. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

After Solomon's death, Israel was divided into two kingdoms. The ten northern tribes formed a new government and recognized Jeroboam as their new king. Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. Many Levites and true worshipers of Jehovah moved from the Northern Kingdom to the Southern Kingdom. The Southern Kingdom had a few godly leaders: Asa, Jehosaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah. However, apostasy repeatedly reared up its ugly head in the Southern Kingdom, often controlling life there.

During the period of the Divided Monarchy, God sent many prophets to the nation of Judah including Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. These men of God brought the word of God to the people and the kingdoms. Many individuals and sometimes the leadership of the Southern Kingdom responded to the word of God.

VIII. THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

King Jeroboam soon led the Northern Kingdom into apostasy. As a result the Northern Kingdom was constantly under the judgment of God. The throne changed ruling families repeatedly.

Significant rulers of the Northern Kingdom include Omri and Ahab, who installed the worship of Baal in the kingdom. Jehu led the nation in a half-hearted reform. The nation was finally conquered by Assyria.

The Assyrians carried away many of the people of Israel and intermingled them among many nations. Inhabitants of many other nations were brought to Palestine and intermingled among the people left in the Northern Kingdom. The Assyrians wanted to erode national feelings and create a new nation of people loyal only to Assyria. However, the nation of Assyria did not last long enough to see its dream fulfilled.

IX. THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

The Southern Kingdom survived almost 120 years after the Northern Kingdom. However, the Babylonian empire conquered Jerusalem around 606 B.C. Many of the Jews were carried away to Babylon. One, Daniel, became an important leader in Babylon. Ezekiel was a prophet to the captives.

X. THE RETURN

When Cyrus and the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon, some of the Jews were allowed to return and rebuild Jerusalem. Under leaders like Joshua, Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah, the nation was rebuilt. Judah was a Persian province for almost two hundred years. The prophet Malachi was Israel's last prophet for four hundred years.

XI. LATER HISTORY

Persia was eventually defeated by the Greeks under Alexander the Great. After his death, Palestine was fought over by the warring factions of his empire. Eventually an evil ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes (174-164 B.C.) sought to force Judah into paganism and tried to destroy the Old Testament Scriptures. Many people were killed or tortured.

Under the Maccabee family, the people of Judah revolted and formed an independent kingdom. This kingdom lasted from 167-63 B.C.

In 63 B.C. the Romans conquered Palestine. Judah was a Roman province during the time of the incarnation of Christ. Eventually Judah would revolt against the Roman Empire and be destroyed as a nation. The remnant of the Jews was dispersed throughout the Roman Empire.

XII. ANTI-SEMITISM

The pagan world resented everything about Israel. Israel made them _____ about their lack of a moral code. Much of the pagan world blamed Israel (really they were blaming the Creator God) _____. The Jew became a special object of hatred and Israel became a special target of wrath from all the nations that reject the Creator God.

XIII. MYSTERY BABYLON DISGUISED AS THE WORSHIP OF JEHOVAH

During a number of occasions rulers have been afraid to openly establish paganism among their people. In order to deceive a percentage of Bible believers, pagan religion and practices would be given the cover of the worship of Jehovah.

A prime example is the development of the calf cult by King Jeroboam I. After the northern tribes became a separate kingdom, many people in the Northern Kingdom continued to worship in Jerusalem. Jeroboam feared that this would cause his people to return to allegiance to Rehoboam. He immediately made two calves of gold (copying Aaron in the wilderness) and began his own religion — calling it the true worship of Jehovah. Many were not fooled — II Chronicles 11:13-15.

Throughout I and II Kings the conflict between this phony worship of Jehovah and the true worship of God is referred to at least twenty times: I Kings 12:26-32, 13:1-10, 13:33; 14:1-20; 15:25-32; 15:33-34; 16:1-10, 12-20, 21-28; 17:16-22; 22:50-53; II Kings 3:1-2; 10:28-31; 13:1-7, 10-17; 14:1-23; 15:8-12, 18, 23-26, 27-31 and II Kings 17. The conflict is also mentioned in II Chronicles 11, 13, Hosea 4:12, 10:5 and Amos 7:10-13. Hosea 4:12-14 clearly describes the effect of the calf-cult.

Ezekiel 8:7-18 describes the secret worship of the Babylonian Mystery Cult (see Tammuz v.14) by the leaders of the Jewish religion.